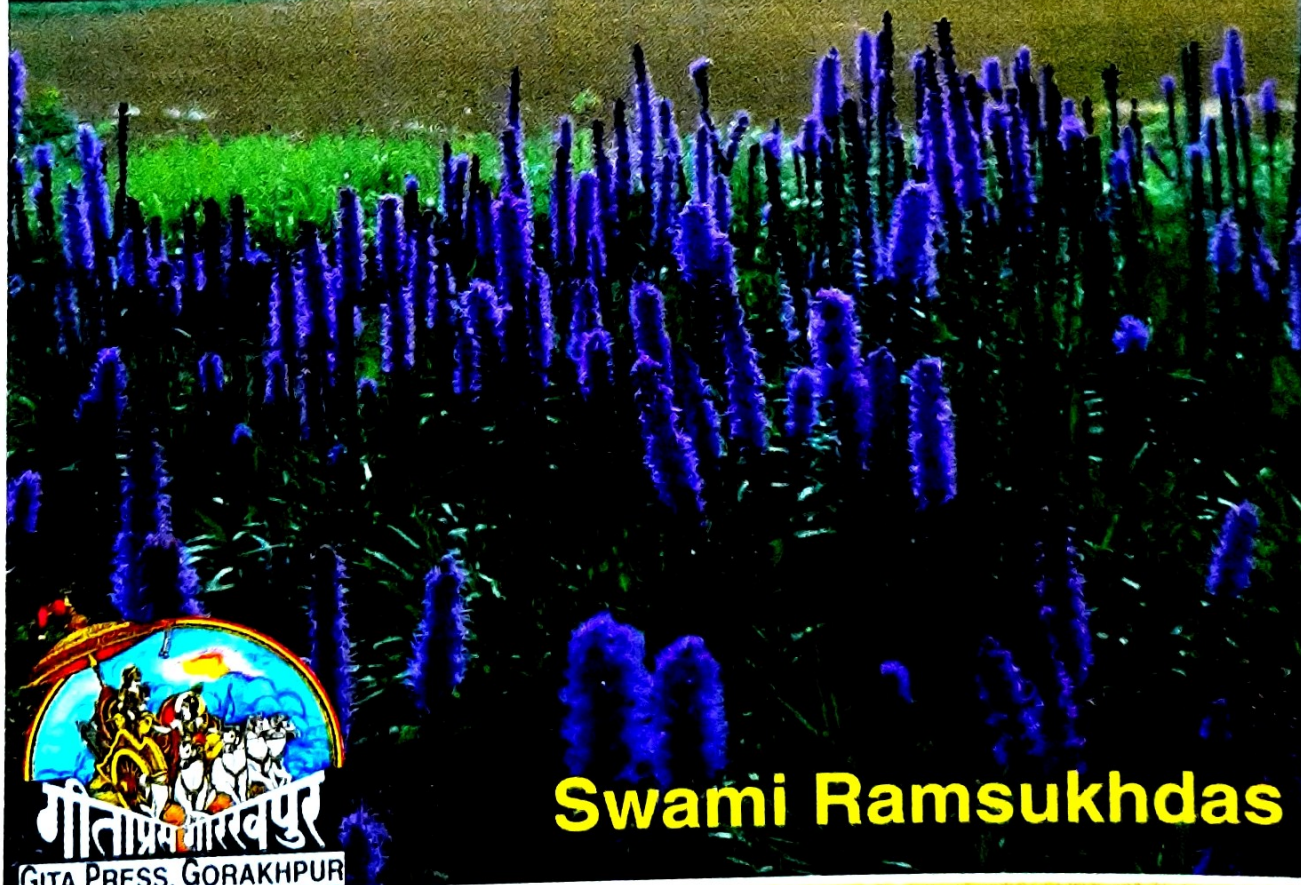


॥ Shri Hari ॥

1523▲

Is Salvation Not Possible without a Guru ?



Swami Ramsukhdas

॥ Śrī Hari ॥

Humble Submission

During my visits to different places for Satsaṅga and Spiritual Discourses, many people ask me variety of questions about Guru and they get satisfied also from the replies given to them. A number of them insisted that a book may be published on this subject so that various enquiries and doubts existing in the minds of people may be cleared. This book has been written with this objective only.

Some people who do not try to understand my thoughts deeply on this subject, generally make comments that I criticize and condemn the concept of Guru. This is totally wrong. I never criticize a Guru but I do condemn the fraudulent Gurus. Nobody can ever condemn a Guru. I myself have been blessed with the grace of Gurus and I hold Gurus with utmost regard and respect. I have also been benefited from Gurus, but those who befool people under the pretext of being Gurus do not deserve any respect. Such frauds must be discarded.

In the present times, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a real Guru. Superficiality and fraud are on constant rise day by day. Therefore, the scriptures have forewarned people to be cautious about the false and fraudulent Gurus in the times of Kaliyuga. This book has been written for guidance

of the genuine seekers who are keen to attain salvation. Earlier another book 'Saccā Guru Kauna'? (सच्चा गुरु कौन?) has been published in Hindi.

In this book, certain verses from Guru-Gītā have been quoted to substantiate the main subject. But in spite of best efforts we have not been able to trace the actual origin of Guru-Gītā and its author. At the end of Guru-Gītā it is mentioned that it has been taken from Skandapurāṇa but no reference has been found of this text in any version of the Skandapurāṇa. Even difference of opinion has been noticed in the various versions of Guru-Gītā published from different places. If any scholar has any relevant information about it, he should please contact us.

Readers are requested to read this book carefully and get themselves devoted to God with sincere dedication. Instead of becoming a follower of a particular person, they should follow the path of Ultimate and Eternal Truth.

—Swami Ramsukhdas

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॥ ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः ॥

Is Salvation Not Possible without a Guru?

Who can be a Guru?—

The one, under whose guidance, we visualise the light of knowledge and who helps us to eliminate the darkness of ignorance—be it in any subject, that person is called our Guru (Spiritual Guide). For instance, the one who shows us the way, when we seek it, is our Guru, whether we accept it or not. We do not need to have a bondage with that person. During a wedding the Pandit gets the bride married to the bridegroom and they are bound to each other for a lifetime, the wife becomes exclusively devoted to her husband. After this, that Pandit is not even remembered and it is not even insisted in the Scriptures to do so. Guru's work is done, once he links us to God. It means that the Guru helps the human being to be in front of God and not to put the being before himself or make a relation with him. Likewise, our duty is to be one with God and not to relate ourselves to a Guru. For instance, there are many relationships in the world, like father, mother, son, wife, nephew etc., it's no way different to form another one with Guru. So, with the already formed several relationships, there's yet another one formed with the Guru. Our relationship with God is eternal

and natural, because we are eternal part of God—
 “ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः” (Gītā 15/7), “ईश्वर अंस जीव
 अबिनासी” (Mānasa, Uttara. 117/1). The Guru makes us
 recall that forgotten relationship and not to form a
 new one.

I often ask, who comes first—the son or the
 father? The answer that usually is, that the father
 comes first. But, in reality, if you see, it's the son
 first, and then the father, because the name 'father'
 comes only when there is a son. First, he is a
 husband and when he has a son, then he is called
 a father. Likewise, when the disciple is enlightened
 with the knowledge of truth, that's when the guide
 is called a Guru. Before acquiring this knowledge
 by the disciple, there is no Guru. That's why it
 is said—

गुकारश्चान्धकारो हि रुकारस्तेज उच्यते ।
 अज्ञानग्रासकं ब्रह्म गुरुरेव न संशयः ॥

(Gurugītā)

It means, 'गु' is darkness and 'रु' is light, so one
 who removes the darkness of ignorance is called a
 Guru.

There is a well-known couplet about a Guru—

गुरु गोविन्द दोउ खड़े, किनके लागूँ पाय ।
 बलिहारी गुरुदेव की, गोविन्द दियो बताय ॥

Guru is accepted with reverence, only when he
 puts the disciple in front of God. It is purely
 deception to become a Guru without showing the

way to reach and know God. One cannot be called a Guru till one can acquire the qualities of a Guru. That's why, there's no glory of a Guru on it's own. His glory is realized only when God is standing along with him, for us to see and feel 'गुरु गोविन्द दोउ खड़े' viz., the one who helps us to realize God.

The real Guru is the one who wants his disciple to attain salvation and works for his welfare (salvation), and the real disciple is the one who is devoted to his Guru—

को वा गुरुर्यो हि हितोपदेष्टा
शिष्यस्तु को यो गुरुभक्त एव।

(Prašnottarī 7)

If the Guru is a realized soul and the disciple acts upon his directions with true feelings, undoubtedly, the disciple would attain salvation.

पारस केरा गुण किंसा, पलटा नहीं लोहा।
कै तो निज पारस नहीं, कै बीच रहा बिछोहा॥

If the philosopher's stone (पारस-मणि) cannot convert iron into gold by its mere touch, it means either the stone is not real or the iron is not real or there is some duplicity in between. In the same way, if the disciple is not enlightened with the knowledge of real truth, it means the Guru must not be enlightened or the disciple must not be faithful or there is some insincerity between the two.



The Real Guru

The real Guru is the one who is only concerned about the welfare (salvation) of his disciple. How can a person be our Guru if he does not have the feeling of our welfare in his heart? So, the real Guru is the one who wishes our upliftment—whether we accept him as a Guru or not and also if he agrees to become our Guru or not. He does not have the desire that he should become a Guru or the others accept him as a Guru or they become his disciples. The one, who wants to acquire wealth, is the slave of wealth. Similarly, the one, who wishes to have a disciple, becomes the slave of the disciple. If a person wishes to become a Guru, he can never lead others to salvation. The one, who wants money from the disciple, is not a Guru, but is the slave of the disciple and, in actuality, he becomes disciple of the disciple. The reason is that the disciple possesses money and so money is the disciple of that disciple, and the disciple of the money is the Guru, so the Guru is the disciple of the disciple. Think about it—could anyone be your Guru if he desires anything from you? No, he cannot be. Whoever wants money, respect, praise from you, is indeed your disciple, not your Guru. A true saint does not crave for the world but the world has a dire need for him. And the one who does not wish to have anything is the real Guru.

कबीर जोगी जगत गुरु, तजै जगत की आस।
जो जग की आसा करै, तो जगत गुरु वह दास॥

The true saints and sages do not have any interest in becoming a Guru but they are keen for the salvation of the world. They have a natural and genuine desire for the spiritual progress of the world. I have also been looking for good saints and sages and been able to find a few of them, but, they never desired that if I became their disciple, I would be blessed. Only the person, who desires to become a Guru publicizes that its essential to have a Guru, that there is no liberation without a Guru etc.

There is no such provision that only a living-person can become a Guru. Śrī Śukadevajī Mahārāja was there thousands of years ago, but he gave initiation to Caranadāsajī Mahārāja. The Guru himself gives initiation to a true disciple, because if the disciple is sincere, he doesn't need to search for a Guru, he on its own gets him. A person with real devotion gets a realized saint.

जेहि कें जेहि पर सत्य सनेहू। सो तेहि मिलइ न कछु संदेहू॥

(Mānasa. Bāl. 259/3)

People seek a Guru, but the real Guru tries to find a disciple. The real Gurus have a strong compassion inside them. For e.g., in this world the mother is held in highest regard, she is the child's first preceptor, she gives birth to a child, feeds him, the child plays on her lap, she upbrings him. Without the mother's presence, all this is not possible. The

mother has lived without the children for many years and it was in no way a hindrance for her to live. But still her fondness towards her child is so intense that she would remain hungry but would make sure that the child doesn't stay hungry. She would face hardships to upbringing her child. Such is the nature of a real Guru as well. Whenever he accepts anyone as his disciple, he conduces him to attain salvation. He has the capability to lead the disciple to salvation. I myself have witnessed such instances.

I tell you a story. There was a saint. He didn't accept anyone to be his disciple, but treated him as a friend. Once, a friend of his was suffering from a very serious illness, and he got scared. He was not even cured by the best of medicines and treatment. The saint asked his friend to pass on his illness to him, but the friend thought—how could he do that? The saint once again told him that when he asks him again, he should not refuse and not put any hindrance; rather he asked him to pass on half of his illness to him. The friend agreed, the saint shared half of his illness. Surprisingly, thereafter, he was cured of the whole of his illness. Such competent souls can only become Gurus. In spite of this capability, that saint didn't accept anyone as a disciple during his lifetime.

After making a Guru, a disciple is made to feel that Guru's status is higher than even God's. As a result of this, the disciple starts worshipping the

Guru, singing his prayers and ignores God. Actually speaking, it is a blunder, it leads one to hell. A true saint, when realizes that his disciples are giving him more importance than God, he decides not to make any more disciples for his lifetime, because the disciples get attached to the Guru and fail to become one with God. If with a true Guru's company, people feel more devoted towards God, then it is desirable but if they develop bondage with the Guru, it would be disastrous. The so-called Gurus who want to attract the disciples towards themselves are frauds and thugs and not sincere Gurus. The real Guru is one who links the disciple to God. For our well being, there is none other well-wisher than God, be it our Guru, or father or mother or any other relation.

उमा राम सम हित जग माहीं। गुरु पितु मातु बंधु प्रभु नाहीं॥

(Mānasa. Kiṣ. 12/1)

Only the imposter's work is to get people worship them and not God. The people who are keen to make disciples, the ones who have greed for money, property, praise, respect etc., and those who want to spread their fame—for such people it is a far fetched affair to lead others to salvation, they can't attain salvation even themselves.

शिष शाखा सुत वित को तरसे, परम तत्त्व को कैसे परसे?

These people bring misery to all beings, in the same way as the fraud hermit brought to King Pratāpabhānu (vide Mānasa, Bāla. 153—175). Company of these saints who always have strong

feelings for welfare (salvation) of others, and don't have any other selfish feeling in their hearts, leads people to salvation. The ones who are selfless and without any desires can only help others to become free from desires. People who are interested in fulfilling their own desires can only cheat others, they can't lead others to salvation.

It is a principle that those who make other people weak are themselves weak inside and those who make other people capable are also capable themselves. The real Gurus can help others to become Gurus and those who wish to make disciples are incapable themselves.

God is always the greatest of all, therefore He does not consider or make anyone smaller to him. Those who totally surrender to Him, become great as well. He makes them equal to Himself, makes them His friend and not disciples. For instance, Niṣādarāja was a true (perfect) devotee, Vibhīṣaṇa was a striver and Sugrīva was a pleasure-seeking person, but for Lord Rāma—all were equal and He considered all of them His friends. Arjuna accepted himself as the disciple of the Lord—

‘शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्’

(Gītā II.7)

But the Lord treats himself as a friend. He does not consider Himself a Guru.

‘इष्टोऽसि’ (Gītā XVIII.64)

‘भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति’ (Gītā IV.3)

In the Vedas also, it is provided that God is a friend to all of human beings—

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्व जाते।*

(Muṇḍaka. III.1.1, Śvetāśvatara. IV.6)

‘The individual soul and the Supreme Soul, like the two birds in a tree, always stay together, share a mutual friendship and take shelter in the body.’

The one who is great regards other as great too and similarly one who thinks, others are lowly and small, oneself becomes so. And the one who is great in reality doesn’t even feel shy or ashamed of being small.

In the epic Mahābhārata, amidst the group of Kṣatriyas and warriors, Lord Kṛṣṇa opted to become a charioteer and when Arjuna asked Him to place his chariot in the middle of the two army groups, he accepted his commands as a disciple. When the Pāṇḍavas organized ‘Yajña’ the sacrificial ceremony, first and foremost, they worshipped Lord Kṛṣṇa. But in that ceremony the Lord Himself picked up the used plates of the Brahmins after meals. Kṛṣṇa never felt embarrassed of doing such small jobs. The people who are actually small are only scared and ashamed of being so and are worried that others may not know about their being lowly and degrade them.

* सुपर्णावेतौ सदृशौ सखायौ यदृच्छयैतौ कृतनीडौ च वृक्षे।

(Śrīmad Bhāg. XI.11.6)

The Glory of a Guru

In fact there is no one who can describe the greatness (glory) of a Guru. In the spiritual texts, reverence for a Guru has been mentioned, as he is considered more important than even God. But this importance is for his truthfulness and not for his vanity, hypocrisy or wickedness, which is on an increase now a days. It is very difficult to judge who is good, who is bad, who is wrong, who is right. The evil which appears as an evil is easy to remove, but the evils (wrongs) that appear in disguise of virtues are very difficult to eradicate. Rāvaṇa, the fraud hermit and Kālanemi impersonated themselves as mendicants in front of Sītā, Rājā Pratāpabhānu and Hanumān respectively, so they didn't realize the ambiguity and fell in their trap. Now a days, the way the disciples are devoted to their Gurus, the Gurus are not worth it. This is the reason that Sethajī Jayadayālajī Goyandakā used to say, "We don't have reverence for the Gurus of today but appreciate their disciples instead, as the devotion of the disciples towards their Gurus is very respectful."

Even the importance of Gurus as mentioned in the scriptures does not deserve to be spread in today's times, as now a days, for their self-interest and greed, the imposters disguise themselves as saints and Gurus. The Kaliyuga also helps in this, as it goes hand in hand with the evil of unrighteousness—'कलिनाधर्ममित्रेण'—(Padmapurāṇa, Uttara. 193/31).

Truthfully, the greatness of a Guru is to be accepted from within and not for spreading or

publicizing. Those, who talk about Guru's importance and publicize books on necessity of a Guru, prove that they desire to become Gurus themselves and so in that case, they can't do anything for the welfare of others. That is why I am not against a Guru but I am opposed to hypocrisy of Gurus and their ostentation. Nobody can negate a true Guru.

The Guru is glorified from the view-point of a disciple rather than from the view-point of the Guru (preceptor or spiritual guide). The Guru has a particular way of looking at things, the disciple has his own angle and a third person has his own opinions, but the greatness of a Guru is measured from the disciple's point of view. The Guru believes that he has been in the background and does not deserve any credit, he has just shifted the disciple's point of view towards an obvious and real truth. The Guru feels that he has just helped the disciple to be aware of the true nature of his self and not contributed anything in anyway. On the other hand, the disciple feels that the Guru has given him all his wisdom and whatever good has happened to him is because of the kindness of the Guru. The third person's opinion is that the disciple has achieved enlightenment because of his own devotion.

The real Guru is the one who links us to God and enables us to realize God. But the one, who just talks about it, but does not lead us to God-realization, is indeed not a Guru. The glory given to such a Guru is artificial and is just to cheat people.



Guru's Grace

Guru's grace or the grace of an ascetic has a special significance. Due to God's grace, a living being is possessed by a human form, and because of the grace of a Guru, he realizes God. Generally people believe that if they accept somebody as their Guru, the Guru would shower his blessings on them, but it is not really so. Everyone takes care of his/her children, even the animals take care of theirs. But the grace (kindness) of a sage is exceptional. It is not the concern of the ascetic, whether people become his disciples or not or whether they love him or go against him. When the ascetic is moved, looking at their humble and distressed state they are automatically blessed by his grace. There is a difference between Kṛpā and Dayā, viz., grace and compassion, grace is accompanied with a sense of command, compassion depicts soft feelings. In compassion there is no command as such, only the heart gets diluted. A disciple's mission is achieved when Guru's heart gets diluted. Jagāī-Madhāī were two notorious sinful persons and used to bear malice against saints, but still Caitanya Mahāprabhu humbly reformed them and helped them in achieving salvation.

The saint is compassionate to everyone, but only the inquisitive aspirant who is genuinely keen to know the essence of Almighty, can be benefited with that kindness. In reality, the one who is devoted towards his goal with thirst to know the true nature of the Supreme Soul—he can only receive that kindness the most. The person, who is truly inquisitive, receives blessings of a saint or a Guru in the same way just as a thirsty person receives water. There remains nothing more to know, once a Guru bestows his kindness but such real Gurus are rare to find.

The Pārāsa-stone can transform iron into gold by its mere touch, but the gold does not have the power to turn the iron into gold with its touch. But if a disciple comes across a genuine Guru, by the Guru's grace, the disciple also becomes a Guru and an exalted soul—

पारस में अरु सन्त में, बहुत अंतरौ जान।

वह लोहा कंचन करे, वह करै आपु समान॥

Such is the extraordinary nature of the grace of a Guru. This grace of a Guru is showered in four ways—by memory, by sight, by words and by a mere touch. The way a female tortoise lays her eggs inside the sand and stays under water itself, but by mere remembering the eggs, they ripen. Similarly by mere recalling nature of a Guru, the disciple

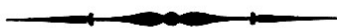
gains wisdom (enlightenment). This is known as Initiation by memory. The fish lays its eggs in water and keeps looking at them from time to time, so by mere seeing them, the eggs ripen. The same way by the sight of compassion, the Guru helps the disciple to attain wisdom. This is called—Initiation by sight. A Kurarī (sparrow) bird lays her eggs on earth, but keeps flying in the air with her particular noise and through that, the eggs ripen. So, the Guru with his profound words helps the disciple to gain knowledge. This is called—Initiation by words. The peahen sits on her eggs and as a result, the eggs ripen. In the same manner, by the mere touch of a Guru, the disciple attains salvation. This is known as—Initiation by touch.

By God's grace, the human body is gifted but it is upto the human being whether to go to heaven or hell or to achieve salvation. But by the grace of a Guru or a Saint, a person does not go to heaven or hell but he attains salvation. A fraud Guru can't do anything for the welfare of his disciples. Formal initiation does not enable a disciple to receive Guru's grace. It is not, that after making a disciple only, the real Gurus or the saints shower their blessings. Their compassion is natural, self-evident. For e.g., if someone makes sun as his ideal deity, then the sun would spread its light, it is not

so. It is the nature of the sun to spread its light, whether people use it or not. Similarly a Saint's and Guru's compassion is self-evident and natural. The one who accepts it, is gained by it, and the one who has disinclination for it, loses it. If it is raining, and you put a utensil, it fills up with water, but if the utensil is kept upside down, it stays empty. So, the one, who is capable enough to feel the greatness and grace of a sage, gains—

सतगुरु भूठा इन्द्र सम, कभी न राखी कोय।
वैसा ही फल नीपजै, जैसी भूमिका होय॥

The rainfall is the same everywhere, but it depends on the seed, what fruit it will produce. In this manner, the grace of God, the Gurus and Saints is uniform for everyone and it is upto the individuals the way they utilize it.



The Significance of Guru's Teachings

When a person makes a Guru, it does not mean, that by doing that, he would achieve salvation. But, for being benefited and blessed, one should follow the teachings of the Guru, because factually Guru is an utterance, not the body—

जो तू चेला देह को, देह खेह की खान।
जो तू चेला सबद को, सबद ब्रह्म कर मान॥

A Guru is not the body and a body cannot be called a Guru—‘न मर्त्यबुद्ध्यासूयेत’ (Śrīmadbhā. 11/17/27). Therefore a Guru is immortal. If the Guru dies, how would he lead the disciple to salvation? The body has been called mean—

छिति जल पावक गगन समीरा। पंच रचित अति अधम सरीरा॥

(Mānasa, Kiṣ. 11.2)

If someone regards someone's body as Guru, then it is sinful and mean like Kālanemi. This is the reason why, it is a sin to regard a Guru as a body and a body as a Guru. This is evident in the character of Saint Ekanāthajī. According to spiritual texts, first one goes for a pilgrimage, then he indulges in worships and thereafter is endowed with wisdom. But, it was just the other way round in the life of Ekanāthajī. He was first enlightened, then he


worshipped and then was allowed to go on pilgrimage, by his Guru. During his pilgrimage, a Brāhmaṇa from his village Paithana went to his Guru in Devagarha and said, “Mahārāja, your disciple, Ekanātha’s grandparents are very old and keep on crying remembering him.” Gurujī was surprised that, even after staying with him for so many years, Ekanātha never mentioned about his grandparents. Then he gave a letter to the Brāhmaṇa to give it to Ekanātha, when he would reach Paithana during his pilgrimage, as the Guru was confident that just because he had told Ekanātha, he would definitely come to Paithana. The Brāhmaṇa went away with the letter. When Ekanāthajī reached Paithana, he stayed outside the village and didn’t go to meet his grandparents. Seeing Ekanāthajī, the Brāhmaṇa recognized him and took his grandfather to meet Ekanāthajī. Incidentally they met him on the way. The grandfather spoke affectionately and handed over the Guru’s letter to him. Ekanāthajī was overwhelmed. He spread a cloth on the floor, kept the letter on it, took a round around it, bent down in front of it with respect. Inside it was written, “Ekanātha, you, stay there only”. Ekanāthajī sat there itself and didn’t go anywhere for the lifetime. His house was built up there. The Satsaṅga started. His grandparents started staying with him. Then he never went to meet even his Guru. Think about it, is Guru the body or an utterance? When his Gurujī passed

away, he said, "If the Guru dies and the disciple laments, what knowledge did he gain?" It means, the Guru never dies, he is immortal and the disciple never cries and laments.

The kind of devotion Ekanāthajī had for his Guru, is very rare to see in any other saint. The commentary he wrote in Marāṭhī, on the eleventh section of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, in each chapter at the beginning there is a detailed praise for a Guru. Ekanāthajī, the supreme devotee of his Guru, always gave more significance to his utterances, teachings than to the Guru.

There are five things with the help of which we can be benefited from the Almighty—(1) The uttering of God's name (नाम-जप), (2) Meditation (ध्यान), (3) Devotion (Service) (सेवा), (4) Obedience (आज्ञापालन) and (5) Company (सत्संग). But to gain something from the saints and sages, there are only three things necessary—Devotion (Service) (सेवा), Obedience (आज्ञापालन) and Company (सत्संग). That is why instead of uttering Guru's name and meditating upon him, it is more important to obey his orders and follow his principles. To make one's life according to Guru's principle is the real devotion and real service to a Guru because for the saints and sages, principles are more loving (significant) than the body. For the sake of their principles, they give away their life, but do not give up those principles.

A Guru is the reality (truth) and not the body. That is why a true Guru teaches the disciple to worship God and not himself. They also don't expect the disciples to obey their orders but to follow texts like Gītā, Rāmāyaṇa etc. The Gurus who get themselves clicked (photographed) and ask the disciples to wear their photos around their neck and to worship it, are frauds. It is contradictory—the spiritual, pure soul of God on one side and the mortal materialistic impure body made of bones and flesh on the other side. It is a sin that people instead of worshipping God, worship the effigy (body) made of flesh and bone. For instance, the one who opposes the king and goes against him, is disloyal towards his kingdom, similarly a Guru, who gets his worship done is disloyal towards God. A gentleman asked Seṭhajī Jayadayāla Goyandakā, the founder patron of Gita Press, that he wanted to have his photograph. Seṭhajī asked the man to tie his shoes on Seṭhajī's head and then click a photo. He meant that getting his snap clicked was nothing less than to get hit by shoes. Once, Seṭhajī asked a saint, "You give your pictures in books, propagate your name, photo etc., does that do any good to you or to your disciples, or to the world?" The saint was too embarrassed to give any answer.



Who has the Right to be a Guru?

A Guru's importance is said to be even more than Almighty generally. But this grandeur belongs to that Guru, who leads his disciple to salvation. It is said in Śrīmad Bhāgavata—

गुरुर्न स स्यात्स्वजनो न स स्यात्
पिता न स स्याज्जननी न सा स्यात्।
दैवं न तत्स्यान्न पतिश्च स स्या-
न्न मोचयेद्य समुपेतमृत्युम्॥

(Śrīmadbhā. 5/5/18)

“The one who does not enable us to get rid of death, right in front of us, is not a real Guru, nor a real friend nor a real father nor a real mother, nor a real husband nor the favourite deity”. Therefore in saints' utterances it is mentioned—

चौथे पद चीन्हे बिना शिष्य करो मत कोय।

It means that one should not become a Guru, till he is capable to lead the disciple to salvation, because it is a deadly sin to be a Guru and not to lead the disciple to achieve enlightenment.

हरइ शिष्य धन सोक न हरई। सो गुर घोर नरक महुँ परई॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 99/4)

He goes to hell because a devotee could have gone somewhere else to attain salvation, but by being tied up with that Guru as a disciple, he was unable to do that. He was gifted with the human body to be enlightened, but the Guru obstructed his way. For instance, a dog enters a house and the head of the family shuts the gate. The dog does not get anything to eat in that house, and can't go anywhere else also to get food. Similarly, the condition of a disciple is the same now-a-days. The Guru is unable to conduce the disciple to attain salvation and also doesn't let him go anywhere else, and if he tries to do that, he and his disciples threaten him by saying how he can become someone else's disciple. Śrī Karapātrījī Mahārāja used to say that a Guru who makes disciples but is unable to lead them to salvation, such a Guru is born in the form of a dog and the disciple becomes a cattle-louse who sucks his blood, in the next birth.

मन्त्रिदोषश्च राजानं जायादोषः पतिं यथा ।

तथा प्राप्नोत्य सन्देहं शिष्य पापं गुरुं प्रिये ॥

(Kulārṇavatantra)

‘The way a secretary's (minister's) fault affects the king, a husband get affected by his wife's shortcomings, similarly a disciple's sin passes on to his Guru.’

दापयेत् स्वकृतं दोषं पत्नी पापं स्वभर्तारि ।
तथा शिष्यार्जितं पापं गुरुमाप्नोति निश्चितम् ॥

(Gandharvatantra)

'The way a wife's faults and vices are owned by her husband, likewise, a disciple's collected sins are certainly acquired by the Guru.'

There is a true instance of a saint's earlier birth, he was the minister (secretary) of a king. He got free from worldly desires and became a recluse. Many sages came to stay with him. The king started pondering that he should make the secretary his Guru and worship God, so he went to him and became his disciple. When the Guru (the secretary) passed away, that king was given the seat of his Guru and he became a 'Mahanta' (the Chief Priest). After being throned as the Chief Priest himself, the king began to enjoy sensual pleasures, as that was his old habit. As a result, after death he went to hell. His Guru went to heaven but when the king took a rebirth, the Guru also had to be born once again. So then, Gurujī diverted him towards worship of God and made him his friend, not a disciple, and for his whole life, he didn't make any other disciples. This incident proves that one should become a Guru only if he may enable his disciple to achieve salvation, otherwise, he would have to take a second birth along with the disciple in order to lead the disciple to salvation.

The modern Gurus do not lead their disciples towards God, instead divert them towards themselves. This is a very big offence. A human being wants to be absorbed in God, but if he is initiated as a disciple, he gets stuck with the Guru. Then, how could he reach God? So, the Guru becomes an obstruction in putting the disciple face to face with God. The genuine Guru is the one who supports the disciple to be in front of God, to have faith in God and to worship Him. For e.g., Hanumānjī assisted Vibhīṣaṇa to believe in Lord Rāma rather than diverting him to himself.

सुनहु विभीषन प्रभु कै रीती । करहिं सदा सेवक पर प्रीती ॥
 कहहु कवन में परम कुलीना । कपि चंचल सबहीं बिधि हीना ॥
 प्रात लेइ जो नाम हमारा । तेहि दिन ताहि न मिलै अहारा ॥
 अस मैं अधम सखा सुनु मोहू पर रघुबीर ।
 कीन्हीं कृपा सुमिरि गुन भरे बिलोचन नीर ॥

(Mānasa. Sundara. 7)

In words of Śrī Śaraṇānandajī Mahārāja—

‘The teachers (preachers) who divert the people to have faith in themselves and to form a relationship with them, instead of making them believe in God and be in communion with God, commit a deadly sin’ (Prabodhinī).

Instead of having faith in a person, if one would devote himself with trust in God, he would gain more, achieve soon and that too in an extraordinary

way. That is why, a Guru who tries to win disciple's confidence in him, expects him to serve him, asks him to utter his name, meditate upon him, worship him, gives his leftovers of food to him, gets his feet washed—takes the disciple towards downfall. So one should be cautious about such a Guru.

We, being a part of God have an eternal and deep relationship with Him. This connection is self-evident and natural—not artificial, but the link with a Guru is not real but false. False (artificial) relationship does not lead to salvation but to bondage, because we continue to be tied up with the untrue relations of the world. Ponder over it, if someone ties himself with a Guru, is he elevated spiritually or has he realized the self or God or has he attained salvation? It is very nice if someone has been successful in fulfilling this endeavour, but somehow it is difficult for me to believe it.

On one hand, a person makes a Guru and on the other hand, the people who don't have a Guru but attend discourses in company of sages and saints—do you feel any difference between them? Think about it—is it more important to be a disciple of a Guru or to gain from spiritual teachings? If some people have a feeling that by making a Guru, the Guru will lead them to salvation, they become slack in their spiritual practice. The people who are having a Guru have more flaws such as attachment and

aversion than the ones who are in the company of pious men. If a person has a good company, he would not fight or be violent with others, but the disciples of a particular Guru do so against the disciples of the other Gurus. They don't attain salvation, it is nothing else but a self satisfaction that they own a Guru. This is the reason, that they don't achieve salvation just by being devoted to a Guru.

It is very risky to be a Guru and to make a Guru, it is not a fun. A man goes to a shop and asks the sales person to give him a particular cloth, is it fair that the shopkeeper takes the money from him and does not give him the cloth? If he didn't want to give the cloth, why did he accept the money and if he took the money, why should he not give the cloth? Similarly, is it fair that you accept a disciple, take the offerings from him but do not lead him to salvation? If this is so, it is deceiving. Why does a man become a Guru and own a disciple, take offerings from him, get himself worshipped by him, if he is unable to lead the disciple to salvation? You don't have the right to be a Guru, if you can't get the disciple to achieve God and to liberate him from the worldly bondage. Let him go somewhere else to seek knowledge. Otherwise it is a big injustice, his human birth becomes meaningless. In this case, how would he attain salvation? That is why, as far as possible the disciple shouldn't have any relationship

with a Guru. Even without forming this type of relationship, if you listen to saints and follow their teachings, you would gain but even if you don't follow their teachings, you would not lose anything. Therefore, in absence of a Guru-disciple tradition, you can only gain and not lose. But, if one forms a relationship with a Guru and does not follow his teachings, he will suffer loss. The reason is that if the Guru is the genuine one, and we ignore him, this would be an offence to the Guru which even God would not forgive.

शिवक्रोधाद् गुरुस्त्राता गुरुक्रोधाच्छिवो न हि ।
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन गुरोराज्ञां न लङ्घयेत् ॥

(Gurugītā)

‘A Guru can save us from the destructive anger of Lord, Śaṅkarajī, but if the Guru gets angry, even Śaṅkarajī wouldn't be able to help us. This is the reason, why with best of efforts and in all the ways, we should not ignore the orders of a Guru.’



A True Guru is Rare

गुरवो बहवः सन्ति शिष्य वित्तापहारकाः ।
तमेकं दुर्लभं मन्ये शिष्यहृत्तापहारकम् ॥

(Gurugītā)

“There are many Gurus who snatch the wealth of a disciple, but a Guru who can relieve the disciple of the burning sensation of his heart is rare to find.”

The Gītā talks about the persons who remain engrossed in the welfare of all beings—‘सर्वभूतहिते रताः’ (5/25, 12/4). The true saints always look forward in the interest of all beings and do not attract them towards themselves. They neither make any disciples nor make their sects, nor accept any offerings. They always think for the well-being and salvation of others—and that too not only for their disciples but for all the living beings. Their prayer to God is that all beings should be happy, they should be free from diseases, there should be welfare of all and no one should ever suffer in the least—

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥

The reason being that they have themselves experienced and realized that there is so much suffering in the world and for an everlasting happiness,

it is essential to sacrifice the pleasures of the world. They want that everyone should be free from the worldly pains and experience the highest form of happiness till eternity.

In today's times, it is very rare to find genuine saints and sages. They were rare even in the past, but specially at present, they are even rarer to find. Today it is a profession to be a Guru. They initiate disciples to earn their own livelihood, to impose their own beliefs and systems, to encourage their praise and fame and to serve their own self-interest. The disciples have also developed the same feeling of self-interest now-a-days.

गुरु लोभी सिष लालची, दोनों खेले दाँव।
दोनों डूबा 'परस राम', बैठ पथर की नाँव॥

It is the time for everything artificial—be it a Brāhmaṇa, or a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya, a Śūdra, Hermits, household persons, celibates, sages etc., all are fake. Even vegetables, flowers, spices, milk etc., are adulterated too. So even Gurus are frauds.

मिथ्यारंभ दंभ रत जोई । ता कहूँ संत कहइ सब कोई॥
निराचार जो श्रुति पथ त्यागी । कलिजुग सोइ ग्यानी सो बिरागी॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 98/2, 4)

It is not enough to be just a saint to attain salvation. I have seen this by being a saint myself. Therefore, for one's welfare (salvation), one should not get bonded with any particular human being, not even to a Guru.

In reality bliss, liberation, divine wisdom and attainment of God are not dependent on a Guru. If without a Guru, there is no knowledge of the self, then how would have the first Guru in the world attained wisdom? Thus, it proves that a human being realizes eternal truth only by the grace of Almighty God. But, now-a-days, it has become a common belief that it is pre-requisite to become a disciple, to accept the principles of the Guru and then only the Guru would guide. In such a situation, the disciple suffers a lot because he does not get proper guidance and benefit, his internal ignorance does not vanish, and he becomes so helpless that he can't go somewhere else for proper guidance. If somebody seeks my opinion, I would say, "Attend spiritual discourses, take as much advantage as possible, but do not have a Guru. From wherever, you gain something good, accept it and if there is no benefit in it, move on. You shouldn't get stuck to a Guru."

मधुलुब्धो यथा भृङ्गः पुष्पात् पुष्पान्तरं व्रजेत्।
ज्ञानलुब्धस्तथा शिष्यो गुरोर्गुर्वन्तरं व्रजेत्॥

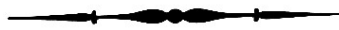
(Gurugītā)

'The way a greedy bee sucks the honey from flower to flower, similarly, a keen seeker of knowledge should go from one Guru to another.'

I wonder what be the state of a person after having a Guru. I have met people who made good Gurus from their view-point, but later, they lost their reverence for them. Therefore, a person who wants

to attain salvation, should not get attached to anyone. A person who himself is caught in the worldly affairs and is incapable of attaining salvation himself, how would he be able to lead the disciple to salvation?

It is really difficult to find a genuine Guru now-a-days, the one with perfect knowledge of the self. So, how would he be able to impart it to his disciple? Such Gurus were rare earlier also as we are not satisfied by reading the books authored by them. The Gurus of a high stature are those who don't insist on their own ideologies like duality or non-duality etc. That is why it is essential for a striver (devotee) to be completely dedicated to God, to be one with God as He is the One Who is perfect and not any particular person. If we move towards God, He would bless us with Yoga, Knowledge and Devotion.*



* तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम्।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते॥

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता॥ (Gītā 10/10-11)

"I give divine wisdom (equanimity) to my those devotees who are constantly dedicated to Me with the help of which they attain Me."

"Such devotees, being part of My existence, receive My divine grace which destroys the darkness of ignorance with the help of light of Knowledge."

A Human's Inborn Guru—Discrimination

It is a vital fact that the Almighty God gives the human body to realize God and along with it He also gifts us a Guru in the form of discrimination. God does not leave anything incomplete. The way an officer gets the facilities of a house, servant, car etc., similarly, God makes provisions for our salvation, along with the human body. He provides the discrimination to discriminate between the real and the unreal, desirable and undesirable, right and wrong. The one who respects his discrimination does not need any external Guru for his salvation and the one who disrespects it—even if he has a Guru, he is not capable to attain salvation. That is why it is not necessary to have a Guru.

The more a being gives importance to his discrimination, puts it to use in his life, the more his discrimination is enhanced and finally the discrimination is transformed into self-realization. The respect towards one's discrimination is achieved by attending religious discourses and not by making a Guru—

‘बिनु सतसंग बिबेक न होई’ (Mānasa, Bāla. 3/4)

True saints and sages don't make any disciples, still people achieve salvation by attending to their discourses and teachings. True knowledge flows from their natural behaviour and scriptures are made out of their utterances. Therefore, as far as possible, for our spiritual progress we should concentrate on the discourses and teachings of real saints and not get attached to a Guru.

The MewāRa King's uncle was Mahārāja Caturasimhajī. He used to listen to religious discourses and whenever any good utterance was heard, he moved on to translate it into practice in his life. His decision was to follow it for his whole life. This way he became a true saint himself. He composed several volumes and was known as 'Vālmīki' of Mewārī dialect. Similarly you shall also become saintly if you start practising all the good that you get and hear.




Pre-Eminence of a Disciple for Attaining Salvation

A Guru who is a (Mahanta) head of a particular sect and owns a lot of wealth; in such a case, the pre-eminence of a Guru is to be accepted, if one wants to gain that wealth from him. A disciple would get money only when the Guru accepts him as a disciple. Without the consent of the Guru, a disciple cannot acquire any wealth from him. Therefore, for obtaining wealth, the role of a Guru is prominent, but to gain knowledge and to attain salvation, the status of a disciple is of primary importance. If a disciple is not keen for his salvation, then a Guru can't help him, but if a disciple is keenly interested in his salvation, then even without Guru's assistance, he will attain salvation.

Swāmī Rāmānandajī refused to initiate Kabīra as his disciple. So one day Kabīra lay down on the stairs of Pañcagaṅgā. When Rāmānandajī passed from there to take bath, he unknowingly stepped on Kabīra. When he realized this, he uttered 'Rāma-Rāma'. Kabīra thereafter accepted this 'Rāma-Rāma'

as the secret message given by the Guru (Guru's Mantra) for his spiritual guidance and started practising it. As a result, Kabīra became a universal saint amongst all the other saints. In another incident, Dronācārya refused to accept Ekalavya as his disciple. So he made a statue of him and treated it as his Guru, started learning archery and as a result became even more perfect than Arjuna. Therefore, it is not essential that by being attached to a Guru only, you attain salvation. If that was the case, have all those persons who devoted themselves to a Guru, attained salvation? Have they attained God? The one by whose teachings and guidance, we attain salvation, is the true spiritual guide for us, whether we consider him a Guru or not or whether he treats us as his disciple or not, and even if the Guru is not aware of this. Dattātreyajī talked about his 24 Gurus but did anyone of them go to him to accept him as his disciple or to tell him that he was his Guru? A Guru should be such that he remains unaware that he has a disciple.



Attainment of God is not Dependent on Guru

The realization of Supreme Soul, Whom we want to attain, is not confined to any particular place, not possessed by any particular person and if it is so, how would He benefit us? The Almighty is ever attained to all beings. The sages, who are knowers of the reality of Divine Soul, neither aspire to become Gurus nor they accept any gifts, instead they help the seekers openly. The ones who are not inclined to become Gurus are able to teach us the truth of the Soul better, and not the ones who accept to become Gurus.

The people who buy and sell the name of God, bargain about it and who emphasize that the prerequisite for them to help in showing the way to reach God, is to become their disciples—are not true Gurus. It is a principle that a thing that is bought for a particular price is of less value than the amount paid. If a watch is bought for Rs.100, the shopkeeper himself has not bought it for that much but for less than that. If by accepting a Guru, a thing is achieved, then it certainly cannot be equivalent to the Guru

but something lower than the Guru, and not of that value. So how can God be attained by it? God is invaluable. Such a valuable possession can only be had without paying any value because an invaluable item cannot be bought at any price and on the other hand, if a price is paid for a thing, it is of less value than the price paid. Therefore, if someone wants you to be a disciple, disagree with folded hands and be sure he is not the Guru. He is a Kālanemi in disguise. Kālanemi devil personified as a Guru once told Hanumānjī that he would impart him knowledge after initiating him—

सर मज्जन करि आतुर आवहु। दिच्छा देउँ ग्यान जेहिं पावहु ॥

(Mānasa, Laṅkā. 57/4)

After realizing the truth, Hanumānjī told him to accept his fees to be a Guru before utterance of his teaching of the secret message (*Guru Mantra*) and later on as a token of his fees, Hanumān caught hold of his body with his tail and knocked him down.



Our Own Yearnings Lead Us to Welfare

Lord Kṛṣṇa has specified in the Gītā—

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

(6/5)

“Attain personal upliftment through your own self, not downfall; as we are our own friend and our own enemy as well.”

It means that we are wholly responsible for our elevation as well as our downfall and not someone else. Since God has gifted us with this human body, He has also given us all the sources for our salvation. That is why we do not require anyone else for our salvation.

Only one's own inward surrender, dedication and obedience to Guru, saints and God ensure him the way to spiritual progress and fulfilment of his aim of salvation. In absence of that yearning in the disciple, how could even Guru help him? For e.g., even if you are provided with best of foodstuff, how would you enjoy it, if you are not hungry? Similarly, if one does not have the keen and sincere yearning, how would the discourses by Gurus and Sages help him?

The guidance of a Guru, Saint and God is always available. There have been a number of famous saints, teachers, Gurus, incarnations of God,

but still we are not liberated. This proves that it is we who have failed to derive benefit from them. Therefore, we are responsible for our upliftment as well as our downfall, and if anyone considers other people to be the cause of his upliftment and downfall, he can never attain liberation (salvation).

Truly speaking, human is the Guru (master) of himself—‘आत्मनो गुरुरात्मैव पुरुषस्य विशेषतः’ (Śrīmadbhā. 11/7/20).

So, we should guide and preach to ourselves. Instead of finding faults with others we should look at ourselves to find out our shortcomings and make adequate efforts to free us from them. We are our own master, our own leader and our own ruler. Meaning, we can transform our life by our own yearning, perseverance and endeavour and it is not done only by a Guru or God. If that was so, why are we still deprived of attaining salvation? The problem is that we are short of our efforts towards salvation while there is no dearth of Gurus, Saints, Sages and the Almighty. Spiritual enlightenment is not dependent on them but it totally depends on the seeker himself. When in absence of our own aspirations for our salvation, even the Supreme Lord cannot help us, then how can any human being lead us to salvation, if we don't have a keen desire? Any number of Gurus we might approach, it wouldn't help us. On the other hand, if we have a true yearning in our heart, we would find a Guru, a Sage, God, good spiritual books

and wisdom. How it would happen, we don't know but leave it to God. When a fruit is ripe, the parrot itself flies to eat it. Similarly if we are pure and real seeker, a true Guru would approach us himself. The keenness of a disciple to get his Guru is relatively less intense than that of the Guru to have a true disciple. If we get a fraud Guru, God would free us from his clutches. It is a rule that when a person has the desire towards his spiritual progress, he does not get stuck-up anywhere. When a seeker finds the holy company of exalted souls, he holds on to it and he sticks to it.

If you are determined to rise to attain salvation, then there is nobody who can stop you and if you are not keen for it, then even a good Guru or a Sage can't help you in the attainment of salvation. If you are ready to attain self-realization, then not only the saints would encourage you but even the thieves, frauds, violent creatures like lion, snakes etc., and the whole world would help you to intensify your pursuit. I have experienced that if the person who is whole-heartedly devoted to God but is engulfed with hardships, these hardships also prove to be helpful in his spiritual progress. Not only this, even if a person who doesn't accept the existence of God, attains true wisdom if he develops true aspiration for salvation.

A rich man keeps a servant for doing his chores as a Brāhmaṇa to do rituals, but if he is hungry or unwell, he himself has to do the required efforts to

eat food and take medicines for his good health—no one else can help him in that. If this is the case, then how would you uplift yourself towards spiritual transformation, if you don't have the yearning to make true efforts yourself for your chosen ideal. If you truly dedicate yourself to God, then the sages and Gurus would help you, but you have to intensify your pursuit towards spiritual enrichment yourself. Therefore, it is a deceiving belief that a mere guidance from a Guru would lead us to salvation.

A mother can be very caring and loving but if you are not hungry, how can she help you to eat food? Similarly, if you do not have the longing for salvation, how can God, in spite of being compassionate and forgiving help you in your endeavour? There is a case like this in the epic Mahābhārata, when Draupadī remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa during distress of pulling away her clothes by Kauravas, He appeared for her help in the form of clothes, but when Yudhiṣṭhira didn't call out the Lord for help while he was losing in gambling, how could God reach him as his saviour? Yudhiṣṭhira faced afflictions and was tormented in the jungle for 13 years. Kuntī asked Kṛṣṇa, "Don't you have mercy on the Pāṇḍavas"? The Lord replied, 'What can I do?' Yudhiṣṭhira lost his kingdom, wealth etc., in gambling but never remembered Me to help him.



God is the Supreme Guru

The Lord is master (the spiritual guide) of the entire world—

‘कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम्’

‘जगद् गुरुं च शाश्वतम्’ (Mānasa, Araṇya. 4/9)

He is not merely a Guru but he is master of all the Gurus—

‘स ईशः परमो गुरोर्गुरुः’ (Śrīmadbhā. 8/24/48)

‘त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्’ (Gītā 11/43)

King Satyavrata submits to the Lord—

अचक्षुरन्धस्य यथाग्रणीः कृत-

स्तथा जनस्याविदुषोऽबुधो गुरुः ।

त्वमर्कदृक् सर्वदृशां समीक्षणो

वृतो गुरुर्नः स्वगतिं बुभुत्सताम् ॥

(Śrīmadbhā. 8/24/50)

“Like a blind person accepting another blind person as his guide to show path, ignorant people accept other ignorant ones as their Guru. Oh Lord ! You are enlightened like the Sun and sole initiator of all human senses. We, the seekers of ultimate truth adore You alone as our Guru.”

Most prominent of all the devotees, Prahāda says—

शास्ता विष्णुरशेषस्य जगतो यो हृदि स्थितः ।
तमृते परमात्मनं तात कः केन शास्यते ॥

(Viṣṇupurāṇa 1/17/20)

“Lord Viṣṇu Who always stays in our heart is guide and teacher of the whole world. Dear father, who else can show the right path other than the Lord Himself? No one can.”

Since God is Guru of the whole world and we are part of this world itself, how can we be devoid of a Guru? We are disciples of the real great Guru. The Gurus of the present times of Kaliyuga, are very dangerous, but we need not feel scared when the world's Almighty is our Guru. There is no chance of any loss or failure but always a certainty of being gained. Therefore if we accept God as our Guru, study His utterances in Gītā and reform our life accordingly, there is no doubt about our liberation. We may select any one—Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Śaṅkara, Hanumān, Gaṇeśa or the Sun as our Guru.

The king of elephants Gajendra says—

यः कश्चनेशो बलिनोऽन्तकोरगात्
प्रचण्डवेगादभिधावतो भृशम् ।
भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाति यद्भया-
न्मृत्युः प्रधावत्यरणं तमीमहि ॥

(Śrīmadbhā. 8/2/33)

“The Lord Who gives protection to the devotee, who seeks refuge in Him, from a highly poisonous fast running snake of time, and being scared of Whom even death is running, I take refuge in Him.”

The essence of the Gajendra’s statement is, “Even without knowing the identity of the Lord, I take shelter in Almighty God.” In the same way if we surrender ourselves to God, either we shall get a right Guru or God himself shall become our Guru.

We are fragments of God—‘ममैवांशो जीवलोके’ (Gītā 15/7). Therefore He is not only our Guru but He is father, mother and everything for us. Actually we are not to bind ourselves with a worldly Guru. We have to accept our affinity with God. Real Guru is one who leads us to such a bondage with God. We need not seek anybody’s advice for this purpose because all beings are naturally and permanently bound with God and no middleman is required for this. Why should we create the distance of a middleman between us and God when we are ourselves capable of having an intimate and direct relationship with Him. By doing so we shall attain salvation even without seeking—

अति दुर्लभ कैवल्य परम पद । संत पुरान निगम आगम बद ॥
राम भजत सोइ मुकुति गोसाईं । अन इच्छित आवइ बरिआई ॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 119/2)

Therefore the Lord says in Gītā—

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

(Gītā 9/34, 18/65)

“Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, prostrate thyself before Me.”

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

(Gītā 18/66)

“Give up dependence on all duties and surrender completely to Me.”

The Lord speaks of complete surrender to Him without becoming a Guru.



Generosity of God, the Preceptor of the World

God possesses endless virtues. All that has been written in the scriptures and stated by sages about the unlimited virtues of God is not sufficient to describe the full dimensions of God's virtues. Ardent devotee of the Lord, Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa also says—

‘रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई’ (Mānasa, Bāla.26/4)

Some other saints have also stated that even God Himself is not fully aware of His infinite strength. Out of infinite virtues there are three main virtues of God. Omniscience, Omnipotence and all Compassionateness. It means that none else other than God possesses so much knowledge, strength and grace. In spite of this strong support of God, being at your disposal, if you fail to attain salvation and continue to suffer, how can an ordinary Guru lead you to salvation? Is a Guru more knowledgeable, powerful and generous than God? This is nothing more than an illusion and deception. So long a true yearning for salvation does not develop in yourself, even God cannot help you in attaining salvation, then how will a Guru (spiritual guide) lead you to the attainment of this goal?

The virtues that you see in Gurus and saints are not their own but they have been derived by them from God and have been assumed by you. For example sweetness found in any sweet dish is basically due to sugar in it, similarly any virtue or speciality that you see anywhere in this world springs out from God only. The Lord says in Gītā—

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥

(10/41)

“All the grand, delightful and powerful beings and objects that exist, are outcome of my excellence.”

Even the evil beings like demons who oppose God, originally derive their strength from God alone. Hanumānjī tells Rāvaṇa—

जाके बल लवलेस तें जितेहु चराचर झारि ।
तासु दूत में जा करि हरि आनेहु प्रिय नारि ॥

(Mānasa, Sundara. 21)

Then shall the devotee of God be deprived of His strength? Be face to face with God, you shall be freed from sins of millions of lives.

सन्मुख होइ जीव मोहि जबहीं । जन्म कोटि अघ नासहिं तबहीं ॥

(Mānasa, Sundara. 44/1)

But if you do not do so, there is no way out to be free from sins. The Almighty bestows strength on everyone whether he is His enemy, beloved or indifferent. God's creation, the earth accommodates

all alike whether noble or evil, believer or non-believer, sinner or pious. His creations—such as food fulfils everybody's hunger, water satisfies everybody's thirst and air helps everyone to remain alive. God's grace is available in abundance for all beings even if some of them are most wicked and the vilest of sinners. We have to pay for electricity, water and living space but God has provided sun, moon, rivers and plenty of space just free of any charge. When his creations are so kind to human beings, you can imagine the infinite dimensions of his generosity for mankind.

There is an interesting story. A person observed a day's fast on the occasion of Ekādaśī (eleventh day of either half of a lunar month). Next day he wanted to feed someone as per tradition, but due to heavy rains he could not find a suitable person. At last after a long search, he found an old monk. He invited the monk to his house for meals. He placed a plate full of food items before the monk who started eating it instantly. The person reminded the monk that he should have offered the food to God before eating himself. The monk abruptly said, "What is God? You are a fool, you do not understand all this." On hearing this, that man removed the food plate and said, "When God is nothing, who are you to eat the food? We offer the food to you for the sake of God only." The

very moment a mystic voice was heard saying, "This monk has grown old while rebuking Me, but even then I have been providing him food all along. When you are refusing one day's meal to him, how can you claim yourself to be My devotee? If I don't arrange food for him, how long would he survive?" After hearing the divine command, the man felt very much ashamed and begged for monk's pardon and thereafter gave him food with great respect.

ऐसो को उदार जग माहीं।

बिनु सेवा जो द्रवै दीन पर राम सरिस कोउ नाहीं॥

(Vinaya Patrikā)

In spite of this divine presence of such a generous God, if we suffer and expect a Guru to give us happiness and salvation, it is a stupid and deceptive proposition. It is more than sufficient if we prepare ourselves to attain salvation.

God is very compassionate. When He provides living to all of us, will He not help us to attain salvation? Therefore you should develop a sincere and strong desire for your salvation and pray to God, "Oh! my Lord! Let me be free from the worldly bondage and let me realize the ultimate truth. I don't know about any real bliss, help me not to be involved with anything else but to attain the real bliss. Oh Lord! Guide me as to what I should do." God always responds to truthful prayers—

सच्चे हृदय से प्रार्थना, जब भक्त सच्चा गाय है।
तो भक्त वत्सल कान में, वह पहुँच झट ही जाय है॥

God, saints and sages are more concerned about our salvation than we are. A mother is always worried about her children more than the children themselves are, but those children never realize it. Similarly God and His devotees remain engrossed in our welfare without any selfishness.

हेतु रहित जग जुग उपकारी। तुम्ह तुम्हार सेवक असुरारी॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 47/3)

The saints and sages are very eager to help and support those who move towards God with full sincerity. Saints' hearts are always overflowing with compassion for the welfare of others. Who does not feel like giving food to a hungry child?

If someone is very keen with all sincerity for his salvation, God definitely helps him. A Guru can never be such a well-wisher of ours as God is—

उमा राम सम हित जग माहीं । गुरु पितु मातु बंधु प्रभु नाहीं॥
सुर नर मुनि सब कै यह रीती । स्वारथ लागि करहिं सब प्रीती॥

(Mānasa, Kiṣkindhā. 12/1)



Questions and Answers about a Guru

Question : How will salvation be attained without a Guru because it is mentioned in Rāmacaritamānasa that no one can cross the worldly ocean without a Guru?

‘गुर बिनु भव निधि तरइ न कोई’ (Mānasa, Uttara. 93/3)

Answer : It is also mentioned in the same Rāmāyaṇa that—

गुर सिष बधिर अंध का लेखा । एक न सुनइ एक नहिं देखा ॥
हरइ सिष्य धन सोक न हरई । सो गुर घोर नरक महुँ परई ॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 99/3-4)

It means that salvation is not possible with the help of a fraud Guru. Only having a Guru is not sufficient. Salvation is only possible when you follow the path shown by a real saint and in that case he is your only Guru. Saint Dattātreyā has mentioned about his twenty-four Gurus in Śrīmad Bhāgavata. It clearly establishes that a person can attain salvation from teachings of any noble soul. Therefore having a Guru is not as important as following the noble teachings. When anybody's teachings help us to attain salvation, he becomes our Guru even without declaring so. On the contrary if we have a Guru but

we do not follow his teachings, it amounts to be a sin and offence and it will not lead us to salvation.

These days a large number of persons are initiated as disciples collectively. In such cases neither the Guru nor the disciples feel concerned about their salvation. The Guru is not worthy to lead the disciples to salvation and the disciples now are not allowed to go somewhere else. Hence it creates a hindrance in the upliftment and salvation of the disciples.

Question : This is a common belief that a Guruless person cannot attain salvation. Therefore is it not essential to have a Guru?

Answer : How can a person who can differentiate between good and evil be called Guruless? Everyone possesses the discretionary knowledge (discrimination) to judge good and bad. He also knows that one should always remember God and must not harm anybody. The source of all this knowledge is a Guru whether we accept him as a Guru or not.

A person who has made a Guru but does not follow the teachings of his Guru is indeed Guruless and is held guilty for disobedience but how can a person who does not have any Guru become guilty?

It is not necessary that one can attain salvation simply by having a Guru, but one can attain it by

one's own yearning and strong desire, rather than by having a Guru.

God is the Guru of the whole world—"कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम्". You are also a part of this world, then how can you be Guruless? It is always beneficial to stay in company of noble saints and follow their teachings. Guru-disciple relationship or bondage is never required. Actually the God realized enlightened and devoted saints never like to have disciples. You shall be benefited by following their teachings even without accepting them as your Gurus. If you do not follow their teachings, it shall not amount to be a sin but if you have a Guru but do not follow his commands, it is a sin (guilt).

Question : It is believed that when a Guru gives a secret teaching (Guru Mantra), it becomes more effective, is it true?

Answer : Such a secret teaching or Guru Mantra shall be effective only when the Guru (teacher) himself is effective. One who does not possess any effective power, how can he impart effective strength through his secret teachings? Therefore it is said—

वचन आगले सन्त का, हरिया हस्ती दन्त।

ताख न टूटे भरम का, सैंधे ही बिनु सन्त॥

It means that utterances of a realized saint are as powerful as the teeth of an elephant, which break open the doors of ignorance. An elephant can break

the doors of a fort with the help of his teeth but it is not possible to do so merely with the help of his teeth alone without the elephant. The reason being that the actual strength is confined in the elephant, not in his teeth. Similarly effective influence lies in the nobility of the saint and not in his hollow utterances alone.

Now-a-days so many people are fond of becoming Gurus and propagating their sects, but none of them are bothered about the salvation of human beings. The size of such sects do expand but it does not help in attaining knowledge of the truth. You can attain the truth only when you practise the spiritual discipline according to your belief, faith, taste and ability. All types of worship and prayer are good, but the real ones are those which are spontaneous and natural while those which require special efforts are all artificial.

These days the seekers and devotees are facing a big dilemma. The Guru has given a Kṛṣṇa Mantra while the disciple's inclination is towards a Rāma Mantra, what to do? In this matter, my advice is that one, whose inclination, faith or devotion is towards Lord Rāma, should worship and chant the name of Rāma. If one is very particular about the teachings of the Guru, one can worship and chant that name by counting the beads of a rosary only once, in the remaining time he should chant the holy name of

his liking. Prayer and worship are effective only when these are in tune with the devotee's nature and liking. The forcibly imposed acts of worship never produce any effective result.

Your own dedication and faith would make the Mantra or worship naturally more effective because the real strength always comes from God and not from an individual. The spiritual powers possessed by sages like Agastya and Viśvāmitra etc., were not given to them by their Gurus but were derived from God through their immense efforts and dedication. The strength of God is eternal, ever present and ever available for all. There is no question of any partiality, whosoever seeks it, gets it abundantly.

Question : Is awakening of Kuṇḍalinī possible without a Guru?

Answer : It is not possible to attain God or salvation by awakening of Kuṇḍalinī. If you awaken a female snake, will you attain salvation? Somebody enquired about Swāmī Śaraṇānandajī's views about Kuṇḍalinī. His simple reply was that, "We know that we have no relation with Kuṇḍalinī. It hardly matters whether Kuṇḍalinī sleeps or awakes, because it is a part of our body and not concerned with our true self. How will a striver transcend the body by the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī?" Therefore it shall not lead you to liberation. Salvation is possible only when you are fully detached from your body.

Question : Some people get super natural experience from awakening of Kuṇḍalinī with the help of some Gurus. What is this?

Answer : Such miracles do happen but they do not help in attainment of eternal bliss or salvation, which is possible only, when you detach yourself from the inert matter viz., when you transcend the body and the world.

Question : I have accepted a chain (rosary of beads) from a Guru but now I have no faith in him. Should I return the chain?

Answer : I never ask you to return the chain (rosary). My advice is that you may count the beads of a rosary once of the sacred message (Guru Mantra) imparted to you by your Guru and the remaining time you should chant the holy name of your favourite deity, according to your liking, study the holy books and attend the divine discourses of exalted souls.

Question : Though I accepted someone as my Guru but now I have lost faith in him. Would it be a sin if I give him up?

Answer : When you have developed a strong disliking for the Guru, you made earlier and have lost faith in him, it means that you have left him. Better thing would be, neither to criticize him nor to have any bondage with him. There is no sin or offence in leaving a Guru who is greedy, has strong craving

for women, has no sense of distinction between good and bad and indulges in undesirable activities.

The scriptures recommend leaving such a Guru:—

गुरोरप्यवलिप्तस्य कार्याकार्यमजानतः ।
उत्पथप्रतिपन्नस्य परित्यागो विधीयते ॥

(Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva 178/48)

“If a Guru, out of his false ego, forgets what to do and what not to do and proceeds on a wrong path, he should be given up, it is sanctioned by the scriptures.”

ज्ञानहीनो गुरुस्त्याज्यो मिथ्यावादी विकल्पकः ।
स्वविश्रान्तिं न जानाति परशान्तिं करोति किम् ॥

(Siddhasiddhāntasangraha, Gurugītā)

“An ignorant, untruthful and confusing Guru should be got rid of, because the one who could not attain tranquillity and peace himself, how can he give peace to others?”

पतिता गुरुवस्त्याज्या माता च न कथञ्चन ।
गर्भधारणपोषाभ्यां तेन माता गरीयसी ॥

(Skandapurāṇa, M.K. 6/7, Matsyapurāṇa 227/150)

“Though a degraded Guru is to be renounced, a mother is never so. Giving birth to a child and then upbringing him make a mother much greater than Gurus.”

Question : May a woman make a Guru?

Answer : A woman should never have a Guru. If

already made she should give him up. For a woman her husband is the only Guru. Scriptures say :

गुरुरग्निर्द्विजातीनां वर्णानां ब्राह्मणो गुरुः ।

पतिरेव गुरुः स्त्रीणां सर्वस्याऽभ्यागतो गुरुः ॥

(Padmapurāṇa, 51/51, Brahmapurāṇa 80/47)

Fire is regarded as Guru of the twice born, a Brahmin is the Guru of all the four castes (Varṇas), while the husband is the only Guru for a woman and a guest is Guru for all of us.

वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिकः स्मृतः ।

पतिसेवा गुरौ वासो गृहार्थोऽग्निपरिक्रिया ॥

(Manusmṛti 2/67)

For women obedience to the marital rites is the only vedic activity (sacred thread), service of the husband is the only period of study and household duties are her only religious sacrifice (Agnihotra).

A woman should not develop any type of relationship with anybody other than her husband. It is my personal request to the ladies not to get involved with any Sādhu or monk. These days various types of frauds, deception and superficialities are being practised. I receive such letters and victimized women also come to me and explain their unfortunate experiences; from which I have formed a strong opinion that in the present days it is disastrous for a woman to make a Guru or to develop relationship with any person other than her husband.

A monk should also not initiate any woman as his disciple. At the time of initiation ceremony a Guru is required to touch the limbs just as the chest (breast) etc., of the new disciple, whereas it is strictly prohibited for an ascetic even to touch a woman. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is prescribed—not to talk of a woman in flesh and blood, an ascetic should not even touch a woman's figure (statue) made of wood and that too not only by hands but even by feet.

पदापि युवतीं भिक्षुर्न स्पृशेद् दारवीमपि।

(Śrīmadbhā. 11/8/13)

The scriptures even go on to say :

मात्रा स्वस्त्रा दुहित्रा वा न विविक्तासनो भवेत्।
बलवानिन्द्रियग्रामो विद्वांसमपि कर्षति॥

(Manu. 2/215)

“A man should not remain with his mother, sister and daughter in a lonely place because sensual temptations are very strong which even the learned persons cannot overcome or resist.”

सङ्गं न कुर्यात्प्रमदासु जातु
योगस्य पारं परमारुरुक्षुः।
मत्सेवया प्रतिलब्धात्मलाभो
वदन्ति या निरयद्वारमस्य॥

(Śrīmadbhā. 3/31/39)

“A person, who wants to attain the supreme state of yoga or one who has realized the truth of the self and the non-self by rendering service to Me,

should never indulge with women because the women have been declared to be the open gateway to hell for such a person.”

विश्वामित्रपराशरप्रभृतयो वाताम्बु पर्णाशना-
स्तेऽपि स्त्रीमुखपङ्कजं सुललितं दृष्ट्वैव मोहं गताः ।
शाल्यन्नं सघृतं पयोदधियुतं भुञ्जन्ति ये मानवा-
स्तेषामिन्द्रियनिग्रहो यदि भवेद्विन्ध्यस्तरेत्सागरे ॥

(Bhartṛhariśataka)

“Even sages like Viśvāmitra and Parāśara etc., who led a life of extreme austerity merely by breathing air or drinking water and eating dry leaves could not resist their lust for beautiful faced women and were deluded. It shall be a great wonder and rather an impossibility if people surrounded by all types of foods and luxuries can control their sensual cravings.”

Under such a situation those people who initiate young women as their disciples and keep them in their Āśramas (hermitages) can attain liberation in their life time, it is unbelievable rather impossible. How can such persons help you? It would be a pure and simple breach of trust.

Question : It is sometimes said that a realized exalted soul is not adversely affected even if he indulges in worldly pleasures. Is it correct?

Answer : It is just impossible. Total liberation and indulgence in worldly pleasure can never go together. Craving for pleasures vanishes even during

the period while the aspirant practises spiritual discipline. The question of such pleasures does not arise at all for a realized soul. Such nonsense utterances are made and spread by selfish unscrupulous elements for their selfish end. It is said in Rāmāyaṇa :

मिथ्यारंभ दंभ रत जोई । ता कहँ संत कहइ सब कोई ॥
निराचार जो श्रुति पथ त्यागी । कलिजुग सोइ ग्यानी सो बिरागी ॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 98/2, 4)

पर त्रिय लंपट कपट सयाने । मोह द्रोह ममता लपटाने ॥
तेइ अभेदबादी ग्यानी नर । देखा मैं चरित्र कलिजुग कर ॥

(Mānasa, Uttara. 100/1)

बुद्धाद्वैतसतत्त्वस्य यथेष्टाचरणं यदि ।
शुनां तत्त्वदृशां चैव को भेदोऽशुचि भक्षणे ॥

“Even after attaining the Supreme Knowledge of real self, if a person remains engaged in irresponsible conduct such as impure food (meat, and wine etc.,) then what is the difference between that so-called realized soul and a dog?”

यस्तु प्रव्रजितो भूत्वा पुनः सेवेत मैथुनम् ।
षष्टि वर्ष सहस्राणि विष्टायां जायते कृमिः ॥

(Skandapurāṇa, Kāśī., Pū. 40/107)

“One who indulges in sex with a woman even after renouncing the world, such a Sannyāsī has to spend sixty thousand years as an insect in excrement”.

Desires are real cause of worldly pleasures and a person attains liberation (salvation) only after

getting rid of such desires fully. Worldly desires disappear even of a striver when he starts spiritual practice. If at all it is mentioned somewhere in a volume that a liberated soul is not even spoilt by indulging in material pleasures, it is there to show the dimensions of his greatness and glory. It is not a rule. For example, it is mentioned in Gītā that a liberated soul who has diluted his ego and whose intellect is not tainted, is never regarded guilty of killing even if he does so nor he is bound. It does not mean that he actually kills anybody.

Question : A Guru can perform a powerful mystic infusion of strength in the disciple, so is it not necessary to have a Guru?

Answer : Performing mystic infusion of strength is not a fun. In present times such miracles are neither seen nor heard of. A person tried to persuade a saint to conduct infusion of strength on him. The saint explained to him, "It is not an ordinary act. Possibly you will not even tolerate it and if it is done, you may even die." When the disciple insisted again, the saint made a mild infusion which horrified the disciple. He started crying, "Everything that was mine is finished, please save me." Such miracles are very rare to perform and still rarer to withstand.

Question : Some people claim that there is nothing wrong in making such people disciples who otherwise would be converted to Islam or Christianity?

Answer : This is a totally wrong statement. Those who wish to become Muslims or Christians shall never come to a Guru. Alternatively if somebody becomes a Muslim or Christian on Guru's refusal to initiate him, the Guru will not be held guilty. But if the Guru initiates a disciple and does not allow him to go anywhere else for attaining salvation and he himself is not worthy to lead the disciple to salvation, he will certainly be held guilty. Such a Guru is certainly not a Guru. By becoming a disciple a person is restrained from taking refuge in God; instead, he takes refuge in the Guru, he is forced to bind himself with the Guru instead of God, it is a great sin and injustice.

Question : It is a common saying that one should drink water after proper filtering and accept Guru after fully knowing him. How to know and test a Guru?

Answer : You are not capable of testing a Guru. If you can test a Guru, it means that you have become superior to him. How can a junior (inferior) can test a senior (superior) one? An examiner is always senior. Under such a situation instead of making a Guru, study the sacred texts and have association with saints who intensify your desire to attain God, who dissuade you from evils and encourage towards virtues, who always remind you of God and enhance your faith and reverence for the Almighty

and finally all your doubts get disappeared and moreover never expect any reward in return from you. Get benefit from their pious company without establishing a Guru-disciple relationship. If you find anything wrong in their company, move on to a better company.

As a matter of fact a Guru is never tested rather you yourself are put to a test. There is an interesting story about it.

There was a young ruler. He called a meeting of elderly respectable and knowledgeable persons of his kingdom and invited their comments about the rule of his grandfather, father and that of himself. He said to them, "You people have witnessed conditions of all the three periods of our rule. Which period do you regard to be the best?" An old man stood up and very humbly said, "We, being your subjects, have no right to give any judgement about you people. However I can say something about myself." The ruler asked him to come forward and say whatever he felt like about himself.

He started saying that during the regime of his grandfather, he was a strong man. One day when he was passing through a jungle, he heard the scream of a woman. It was night time. After sometime he could locate a young lady with bridal dress and jewellery, sitting hidden in a corner. She told him that while she was going from her parent's house

to her inlaw's house with her relatives, some dacoits started fighting with them and she ran away from there and took shelter in that corner. She also disclosed the name of the village of her father-in-law and also the name of her father-in-law whom he knew. He took the lady with him like a daughter and handed over her to her inlaws. Those people wanted to offer him some money for doing that virtuous deed for them but he refused saying that it was his human duty.

Then he said, "After sometime, it was the regime of your father, I suffered heavy losses in business and I was very tight of funds. At that time I thought I had made a mistake. I should have either taken that lady's jewellery by force or at least accepted money offered by her father-in-law. That would have helped me now in my crisis." Though I feel quite hesitant to tell you because you are like my grandson, today I have started feeling that I should have brought that woman to my house and made her my wife. She herself and her wealth both would have given me ample support. Now I have narrated my experience. How can I dare to say how good your regime is? The ruler could clearly understand what the old intelligent man had said. It is very clearly indicated that subjects are always shaped by their rulers.


The essence of this story is that we are not

capable of testing a Guru but at the same time we can test ourselves as how intensely we have been influenced and transformed by him. How it has affected our actions and thoughts. To what extent it has diminished our evil tendencies such as attachment and aversion, lust and wrath etc.

Question : The history narrates a number of examples which prove essentiality of having a Guru. What is your opinion?

Answer : History is never the concrete proof of truth. It is never solid (firm) but always hollow (loose-ended) because it can never be fully known as to under what situation a person did something and in what context. Therefore, lessons can be taken from the history about good guidance. However, truth may be known through scriptures only, what has been sanctioned and what has been forbidden. Sanction is more powerful than history and prohibition is stronger than sanction.

Most of the beliefs and greatness about Gurus have been propagated by those who are fond of becoming Gurus. Therefore, one should remain cautious in the present times of Kali age specially.



For Sannyāsī Strivers (Devotees) and Devotional Singers

Humble Submission

(This article was first published in the ninth year
of Kalyāṇa during the year 1934)

By the grace and permission of the Almighty Lord and His devotees, I am trying to express my feelings, which are dear to me, on the conduct and devotional singing (loud chanting). Though I do not regard myself competent and authorized to write and deliver sermons and directions, nor am I myself able to follow the same conduct fully yet I am trying to discuss some noble thoughts learnt from saints and scriptures which are loving to me. Therefore I am trying to pass some time on such discussion by regarding it as a matter of good fortune for me. I hope, my fellow seekers shall also express their thoughts from time to time, because by this I shall get an opportunity to read their views and those fellows shall also be able to spend some time in spiritual discussions. If some learned thinkers find some faults in the thoughts expressed by me, which I have learnt from the utterings of saints and scriptures, I hope they shall pardon me, by treating me as their own ignorant child.

The seekers should always try to keep themselves away from pleasures, sorrows, passion and anger etc. At least they should not be overpowered by these evils. Out of them, seekers like me should feel scared of the evils of attachment and aversion to wealth and women in the same way as generally people are afraid of ghosts, evil spirits, snakes and wild animals etc. It is to be fully understood that the fall of a Sannyāsī devotee is inevitable, if he is attached to women and wealth.

It should never be presumed that attachment-aversion, passion and fear etc., are Dharmas (a part of nature) of the inner sense. These are not Dharmas (virtues) but evils. One who regards them as Dharmas (nature of the inner sense) continues to treat them inevitable till the end of life because the inner sense remains intact. Consequently in spite of treating himself wise, he accepts that likings-dislikings, passion and anger etc., shall continue to exist as long as the inner sense exists, and he is not at all related to them. Actually this thinking is an illusion. One who thinks so and does not try to overcome attachment-aversion (likings-disliking), passion and anger etc., he is not even a real seeker, not to talk of being wise.

It is to be firmly understood that evils like passion and anger never remain with a truly realised person. A person may be a good orator who can

describe the Supreme in beautiful words based on the citations of scriptures and also who can write logical articles on the real knowledge but it is not necessary that he is a genuine knower of the truth. All these qualities may be acquired by reading scriptures. The role of Śukadeva may be played by anyone in a drama. The wise is the one who has fully crossed the ocean of ignorance. Liking, disliking, passion and anger are parts of ignorance alone, these cannot exist with the real knowledge.

Those people who start accepting themselves Self-realized on the basis of their bookish knowledge and give up their spiritual pursuit by treating themselves free from all prescription and prohibition even before attaining the highest spiritual godly state, they generally face a downfall. Because till ignorance exists, attachment to sensory pleasures remains intact and this attachment is the root cause of all sins. And what to talk of that situation when passion and anger are accepted as inevitable nature of the inner sense. Therefore seekers like me should always be very careful in keeping themselves away from such evils as attachment-aversion, passion, anger and greed etc. Particularly after accepting total renunciation, the seekers should neither establish any contact with women and wealth nor keep company with them. The realized souls are totally free from all such evils.

It should be kept in mind that instead of being a hypocritical realized soul, it is better to remain ignorant because in that case one is afraid of sins at least. A fraudulent (hypocritical) person goes on committing sins purposely to protect his false image. Therefore do not think of fraud even in your dreams, instead become a true Sannyāsī.

यावदायुस्त्वया वन्द्यो वेदान्तो गुरुरीश्वरः ।
मनसा कर्मणा वाचा श्रुतेरेवैष निश्चयः ॥

(Tattvopadeśa 86)

According to the above uttering of the teacher of ethics one should always follow the directions of the scriptures. A Sannyāsī viz., the man of the renounced order should follow some rules—such as not to keep company of the householders, not to see even the picture of a woman, not to touch money, not to establish relationship with anybody, not to be possessive about anything, not to accept any type of honour or admiration. He should always protect his dispassion very carefully and keep his senses in full control. He should not collect worldly objects, not develop any sect or not to make a house and not speak unnecessarily. He should observe celibacy, keep away from passion, anger and greed etc., and should be free from attachment and aversion. A Sannyāsī should always devote himself in spiritual practice and remembrance of God.

A Sannyāsī who does not follow the fundamental discipline of Sannyāsa faces a downfall, therefore he should strictly follow his Sannyāsī way of life. Even the great souls who have risen above prescription and prohibition always perform virtuous noble deeds so that other seekers may follow them.

If you intend to become a devotee, take God's shelter and constantly remember Him. Do not allow cravings for wealth, respect and admiration to enter into the mind. One should not care whether he is regarded as a devotee or not by the people. He should continue to remember and sing the name and glories of God with devotion. As far as possible, one's devotion should not be revealed to others, without giving opportunity to anyone to honour or worship him. Always protect yourself from honour and praise. Company of women or those who are indulged with women should always be avoided. Never allow your mind to develop lust for wealth and reputation.

Do devotional singing wholeheartedly but only to please God and not for entertainment of people, because then it becomes extrovert. The devotional singer should always keep a strong feeling in his mind that his God is present here and he is singing His name and glories before Him and for His pleasure. Get fully engrossed in singing God's name

while remembering Him and His virtues (glories) and meditating on Him. One should go on practising to develop such emotions. Never think whether others have been pleased and attracted by your devotional singing or not. Have reverence and love for God's name and sing His name merged with extreme reverence and love. In such situation God's single name uttered by you can create wonders. God's name uttered once by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to have overwhelming effect on the listeners because his singings were overflowed with the intensity of his love for God.

Remember one more thing. Devotional singers should follow righteous conduct and possess divine qualities. One who sings and dances in the name of God but whose conduct is not pure, cannot leave a good impression on the people. People make such persons as their ideal without knowing the reality of their actual conduct and this gives an opportunity to others to make false allegations against devotional singing, its singers and even against their object of singing, God Himself. Therefore it is our responsibility that due to our conduct, the image of divine singing and our God (Deity) is not tarnished. As a matter of fact, divine singing and God can never be tarnished but why should any suspicion creep up in their mind on account of our conduct?

If conduct is not pure, one should practise devotional singing in loneliness. One should beg and cry before God for purification of one's conduct. But be aware, never try to hide ill conduct nor give any support to ill conduct under any circumstances.

Duties related to your social order and stage of life should never be ignored on the pretext of devotional singing. It should be done while following one's own duties. Knowledge, dispassion, righteous conduct, Varṇāśrama (social order, stage of life). Saṁdhyā-Prayer and Gāyatrī-Mantra should never be criticized, while praising the loud chanting of the Lord's holy name, rather they should be followed properly according to the ordinance of the scriptures.

In the name of spiritual singing one should not indulge in partiality or develop feeling of a high and a low standard in different names of God and encourage groupism. Divine names of God should be chanted and sung with simple, pure, genuine, selfless and exclusive feeling of love and others should also be inspired to do so. But as far as possible refrain from becoming a preacher, a leader or a teacher. Protect yourself from being honoured, admired or worshipped. One should always resist temptations for wealth and women.

At the time of devotional singing, names of God should be chanted with full force of voice. One

should not remain silent out of pride of knowledge, learning, status or riches. If it is a standing Kīrtana (loud chanting of the Lord's holy name), one should not hesitate to stand up. None of our conduct should result in disrespect for the devotional singing of God's names. However dancing should come only when one is overwhelmed with loveful emotions and not just for show. Dancing as an art is altogether different from devotional dancing in God's name.

Always remember that devotional singing with chanting of God's name is a highly respectable and adored way of life. It should be done with deepest of feelings and highest of conduct. Devotional chanting of God's names and its sound shall lead beings to sudden Self-realization of all around as far as the sound reaches.

—Swami Ramsukhdas